

SOLUTION CAN'T WAIT ANY LONGER

And it's clear dramatic changes are needed soon. Hundreds of Adirondack lakes and streams have been killed by acid rain, and they'll never recover. And for years, environmentalists have projected that 40 percent of the lakes will be dead within 50 years. Most recently, the U.S. General Accounting Office, the independent investigative arm of Congress, said the Adirondacks have been socked with so much acid rain, the fragile mountain soil can no longer soak up the pollutant nitrogen oxide. And that means the nitrogen oxide is flowing into Adirondack lakes at a more rapid rate than previously believed.

Moynihan and the rest of the state's congressional delegation are proposing a 50-percent cut in emissions beyond what's called for under the credit allowance program. They would do so by halving the amount of sulfur dioxide that can be produced through the purchase of one pollution credit. Before congressional leaders are willing to consider the measure further, however, they want to know the potential costs of the legislation. Fair enough. The Adirondack Council says the study will show the costs won't be astronomical to the utilities, pointing out they were greatly off base on their projections of how much the original allowance program would cost their businesses.

The Office of Management and Budget could shed light on this important matter. But the only way that will happen is if President Clinton shows sufficient political courage to order the study to be released. He should do so immediately.

[From the Albany, New York, Times Union, Oct. 4, 2000]

ACID RAIN BOTTOM LINE—A NEW EPA STUDY SHOWS JUST HOW AFFORDABLE IT IS TO FIGHT POLLUTION

How much would it cost to keep Adirondack lakes from dying from acid rain? How much to spare thousands of Americans who suffer respiratory illnesses caused by the smokestack pollutants that contribute to acid rain? New York Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan put those questions to the Environmental Protection Agency two years ago, as he and Rep. Sherwood Boehlert, R-Utica, struggled to push through strict new federal limits on emissions of nitrogen and sulfur that drift from power plants in the Mid-west and South and descend on the Northeast, causing health problems in populated areas and killings trees and aquatic life in the Adirondacks and other pristine regions.

Now, after an unjustified delay by the Clinton administration that some critics are attributing to election-year politics, the EPA report is finally public, thanks to a subpoena issued by the House Government Reform Committee. And the price tag turns out to be so affordable that any further delay in reducing smokestack pollution is indefensible. The bottom line: \$1. That is how little the average household monthly utility bill would rise if the Moynihan-Boehlert bill were law.

But time is running short. Congress has only a few days left to conclude its business this year, and there are no encouraging signs that lawmakers will give the Moynihan-Boehlert bill the prompt attention it deserves.

But they should. The EPA report not only makes a convincing case for stricter pollution controls, but it also spells out the benefits that the nation—not just the Northeast—stands to reap in return. In a cost-benefit analysis sought by Mr. Moynihan, the EPA pegs the benefits of reducing acid rain at \$60 billion, compared with \$5 billion that

power plants would have to pay to meet the tighter emissions standards. That's a \$55 billion payback, as represented in savings on treating chronic bronchitis, reducing emergency room visits for asthma and eliminating 1.5 billion days of lost work each year because of respiratory illnesses. There would be scenic improvements as well as the atmosphere cleared over national treasures like the Adirondacks and the Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains national parks.

In the Adirondacks, the struggle is a life-and-death one. A recent Times Union series found that without sharp new curbs on acid rain, half of the Adirondack lakes will no longer be able to support aquatic life in 40 years. Already it is too late to save some ponds and lakes that have been contaminated by nitrogen oxide. The pattern will continue unless prompt action is taken. As our series noted, state leaders and the New York congressional delegation have made a strong bipartisan effort to combat the problem. Now it is Congress' turn. No one state can stop acid rain on its own. But Congress can, and should, provide the necessary federal remedy. The EPA has just given 55 billion reasons to act now.

RAIL SERVICE ISSUES

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I would like to discuss a subject of great importance to our nation and its economy, that is rail transportation.

Earlier today, a few of my colleagues expressed views alleging a failure by this Congress for not passing legislation to regulatorily address rail service and shipper problems. As Chairman of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, I want to set the record straight concerning the work of the Committee to address service and shipper problems.

Since becoming Chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, the Committee has held no less than six hearings during which rail service and shipper issues were addressed. Three were field hearings, one each in Montana, North Dakota, and Kansas. Three hearings were conducted here in the Senate at which the topic of rail service dominated the testimony and members' questioning. I also have publicly stated a willingness for the Committee to hold even more hearings.

Further, Senator HUTCHISON, the Chairman of the Surface Transportation Subcommittee, and I requested the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to conduct a comprehensive analysis of rail service and competitive issues. The STB is the federal agency which oversees rail service and other matters. The Board's findings are extremely important and they were widely discussed during our Committee hearings last year. In addition, earlier this year the Board announced it would conduct a proceeding to change its merger guidelines in recognition of the drastically changed rail industry dynamic that has transformed since the rail deregulation movement of the late 1970's and the 1980's. The Board announced its new guidelines proposal

earlier this week and will be taking comments on the proposal through November 17.

Three very diverse bills concerning the STB's authorities have been introduced in the Senate and another bill was submitted in the House. However, to date no consensus on a legislative approach has been achieved. I have had the privilege to serve in Congress nearly twenty years and during that time I have learned that significant legislation is always the product of careful analysis and bipartisan compromise. Pending rail legislation and the STB's future will be no exception.

My colleagues from North Dakota and West Virginia referred to a letter with 277 signatures seeking rail regulatory changes. I am in receipt of that letter. But I am also in receipt of literally hundreds of letters—letters from Governors, rail shippers, and others—strongly opposing any rail reregulatory efforts.

To allege the Senate Commerce Committee doesn't take the issue of rail service seriously is a gross misstatement. The fact is, and I will repeat it, there is no consensus. A bill supported by only five members is not a solution, but it does allow those sponsors to sound high and mighty about their good intentions.

In order to pass a bill and send it to the President, we clearly have a long way to go. But I remain optimistic, and as a deregulator, stand ready to support any proposal that fairly and safely balances the needs of shippers and carriers.

POLICE REFORM IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, yesterday, an op-ed on police reform in Northern Ireland written by my friend and colleague Senator KENNEDY appeared in the Washington Post. In that op-ed Senator KENNEDY very concisely and eloquently stated why it is so important that meaningful police reform happens in Northern Ireland. As all of our colleagues know full well, Senator KENNEDY has worked tirelessly to promote peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland for many years. It has been an honor to work closely with him in that effort and I commend him for his leadership on this issue. Needless to say I agree completely with him that the recommendations of the Patten Commission must be fully implemented, to ensure a genuine new beginning for a police force in Northern Ireland that will be acceptable to the Catholic community.

I hope and pray that those who are currently playing a role in the legislative process in the British Parliament take time to reflect upon the thoughts expressed in this very important op-ed. I would ask unanimous consent that a copy of Senator KENNEDY's article be